

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

I am writing in opposition to H 7243, a bill to add 10 logging positions to the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM), to support increased even-aged logging, including clearcutting, on public state-owned land.

DEM's destructive logging operations involve bulldozers which disturb the soil, crush native plants and trees, kill animals, and destroy underground root systems and mycorrhizal networks that help the trees in the forest fight pests and diseases.

DEM's logging increases the chance of wildfire because removing the tree canopy results in the landscape becoming dry from the increased sunlight, allows for underbrush to thrive, and leads to more wind blowing through the forest.

The dry wood slash left behind after the logging operation is also highly flammable.

It should be noted that when DEM conducts prescribed burns on state land to remove underbrush, it is often in areas they previously logged.

If DEM didn't log those forests, that underbrush wouldn't be there.

On the next page are some examples of DEM caused deforestation taking place on public state-owned land.

DEM Logging Clearcut in the state-owned Arcadia Management Area from 2024



Aerial photo of 195-acre DEM Logging Clearcut in the state-owned Arcadia Management Area from 2020



Logging bulldozer (skidder) used in 2025 state logging operation in the Arcadia Management Area. These bulldozers disturb the soil and crush native plants and young trees.



Logging Clearcut in the state-owned Hillsdale Preserve from 2018 that never grew back as a forest. It is a field now.



The money that would be used to destroy our state forests through funding these logging operations would be better spent on staffing the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program to identify, monitor, and protect biodiversity for the state.

The RI Natural Heritage Program hasn't existed since DEM discontinued and defunded it in 2007, and Rhode Island needs this program to protect the state's rare and endangered species whose habitats are vulnerable to logging and development.

Please do not pass H 7243, a deforestation bill, and instead support bringing back the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program.

Thank you,

Nathan Cornell

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